

# The Care of the Transgender Voice

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# Disclosures

- Non-financial: None
- Financial:
  - Employee of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC)
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# Background

- Graduate of Princeton Senior High School (2007)
- Member of The Madrigal Singers (2005-2007)
- Attended WV GSA (2005)
- Participant in All-State Chorus (2007)
- B.S. (2011) and M.S. (2013) in Communication Disorders from Marshall University
- Living and working in Cincinnati since 2013
- Evaluate and treat voice disorders
- Established Transgender Voice Clinic in 2017

# Objectives

- Identify transgender, gender spectrum terminology
- Discuss transgender speaking voice
- Discuss transgender singing voice






# Terminology

- Sex
  - Intersex
- Gender identity
- Gender expression
- Cisgender
- Transgender
  - Transwoman; transman
- Gender queer, non-binary
- Gender nonconforming
- Gender Dysphoria

# Gender Grammar

| Problem   | Correction   | Reason  |
|---|--|---|
| “transgendered” (adjective)   | transgender  | Only adjectives that are derived from nouns and/or verbs (unlike transgender) end in “ed.”  |
| “intersexed”  | intersex   | Only adjectives that are derived from nouns and/or verbs (unlike intersex) end in “ed.”   |
| “transgendered” (verb)  | transition   | Only verbs can have “ed” added onto the end of the word to become a participle. Transgender is an adjective, not a verb. One does not “transgender,” they transition. |
| “a transgender,” “transgenders”   | a transgender person, transgender people   | Transgender is not a noun. “Jake is a transgender” is not only grammatically incorrect, but can be offensive.   |
| “sex change,” “sex reassignment surgery,” “gender reassignment surgery” | gender affirming surgery, genital reconstruction surgery, genital reassignment surgery | Surgery does not change one’s sex or gender, only genitalia.  |

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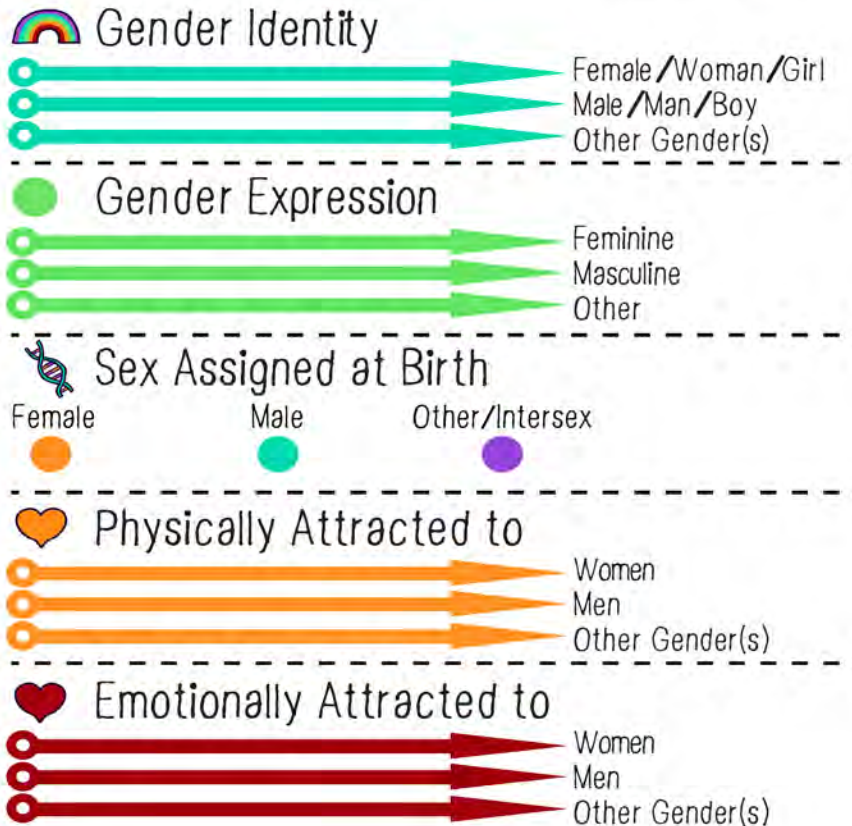
Design by Landyn Pan

For more information,  
go to [transstudent.org/graphics](http://transstudent.org/graphics)

**TSER**  
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# The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:  
**TSER**  
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To learn more, go to:  
[www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore



# Why Support for Trans Youth Matters

Based on a 2012 study of 433 individuals

Trans Youth with Supportive Parents

Trans Youth with Unsupportive Parents



Reported Life Satisfaction

72%

33%

Reported High Self-Esteem



64%

13%



Described Mental Health As "Very Good" or "Excellent"

70%

15%

Faced Housing Problems



0%

55%

Suffered Depression



23%

75%



Attempted Suicide

4%

57%

Travers R, Bauer G, Pyne J, Bradley K, for the Trans PULSE Project; Gale L, Papadimitriou M. Impacts of Strong Parental Support for Trans Youth: A Report Prepared for Children's Aid Society of Toronto and Delisle Youth Services. 2 October, 2012.

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Question:

*What are some ways to make your classroom a safe space?*

Ask about...

# Pronouns





Question:

*Why is it important to think about voice with this population?*

Your voice is your identity. If  
you don't use it, your halfway to  
Asphodel already.

Rick Riordan - The Blood of  
Olympus

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# Transfemale Voice

- Male puberty
- Laryngeal changes
  - Larynx enlarged
  - Vocal folds become thicker and longer
  - Voice deepens
- Hormone therapy has *no* effect on voice pitch
- Voice therapy can raise pitch and be highly satisfactory
- Phonosurgery is an option to raise pitch
- ***Fundamental frequency: 180Hz-250Hz***

# Transmale Voice

- Female puberty – no change in laryngeal area
- Testosterone *can* have effect on pitch
- Testosterone has irreversible effects on larynx which deepens the pitch range – both speaking and singing
- Gradual change in voice
- Larynx lowers; vocal folds thicken and lengthen
- Voice therapy can help in lowering pitch for those who are not taking testosterone
- ***Fundamental frequency: 100Hz-150Hz***

# Purpose of Voice and Communication Training

*“To help clients adapt their voice and communication in a way that is both safe and authentic, resulting in communication patterns that clients feel are congruent with their gender identity and that reflect their sense of self.” (SOC-7, 2011)*

World Professional Association for Transgender Health  
(WPATH)

# Training Targets

- Pitch
- Resonance
- Intonation and Stress
- Loudness
- Articulation
- Rate of Speech
- Semantics
- Non-Verbal Communication



# Evaluation

- Outpatient
- Medical history
- Perceptual assessment
  - Scope only if dysphonia is present
- Measures of fundamental frequency (pre- and post-training)
- QoL scale (pre- and post-training)
  - *Transgender Voice Questionnaire [MtF] (TVQ)*, (2012, Dacakis and Davies)
- Patient goals
- Patient satisfaction (during and after training)

# What does Transgender Voice and Communication Training look like?

- Similarities between traditional and transgender voice training
  - Indirect therapy techniques
    - Education, counseling
  - Direct therapy techniques
    - Resonant Voice Therapy
    - Semi-occluded Vocal Tract Exercises
    - Vocal Function Exercises
- Holistic view of the client
- Client-driven goals

# Transgender Singing Voice

- Easy, efficient voice production is paramount
- Using voice in non-habitual way, so training is imperative
- Monitor singing technique in the same way:
  - Strain
  - Voice quality clear and easy
  - Speaking voice post-singing

# Transwomen Singing Voice

- Benefit from gentle, gradual stretching of upper range
- Semi-occluded vocal tract exercises (lip buzz, vocalizing through straw) in a comfortable pitch range
- Using mixed or head voice
- Slight breathiness can be useful depending on repertoire
- Practical expectations of signing voice

# *How Trans Opera Singer Breanna Sinclair Found Her Voice*



# Transmen Singing Voice

- Ask the question: are they taking testosterone?
  - How long?
  - Is voice stable?
- Goal is to reduce strain if voice is still changing
- Teaching student how to use new voice is key
- If student is not on testosterone, resonant voice training is helpful
- Strong, front focus resonance, non-breathy voice
- Singing too low can be harmful
- Practical expectations of signing voice

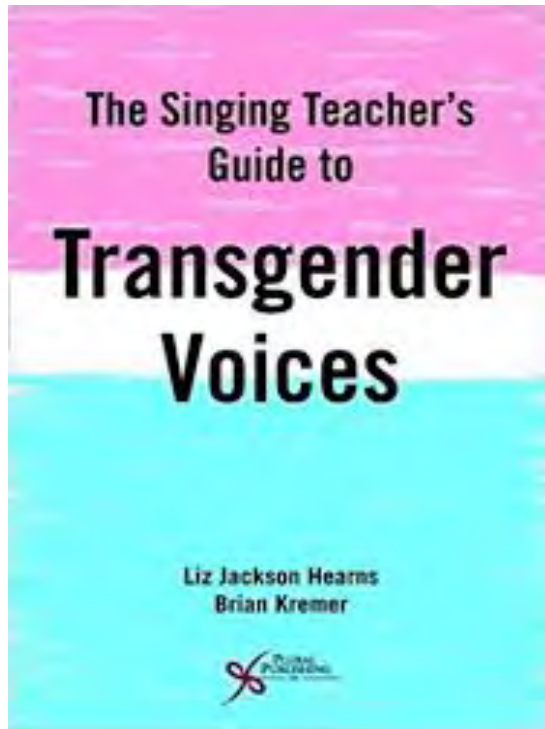
# *The Trans Opera Singer Who Went From Soprano to Tenor*



# Practice

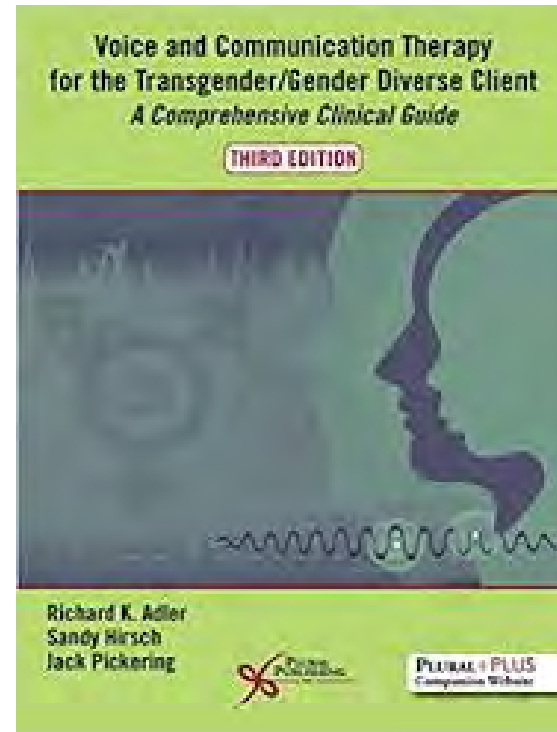


# Books



\$129

(Amazon.com, 2019)



\$105

# Questions

## Thank you!



([https://www.louisville.com/sites/default/files/article\\_image/bleh.png](https://www.louisville.com/sites/default/files/article_image/bleh.png))

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